



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

December 29, 2005

News Release

FIVE INDIVIDUALS INDICTED FOR TRAFFICKING IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS

MIAMI- R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Jesus Torres, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Thomas S. Winkowski, Director, Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), announced today that on December 22, 2005, a federal grand jury in Miami, Florida, returned two (2) separate Indictments against five (5) individual defendants, Lizhou Shao, Changbiao Fu, Li Fen Fu, Ji Wu Chen, and Meihua Li. The grand jury Indicted the defendants on three (3) separate charges: (1) conspiring to traffic in counterfeit goods, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; (2) trafficking in counterfeit goods, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2320(a); and (3) concealing and selling imported counterfeit goods, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 545. The defendants were arraigned before U.S. Magistrate Judge Stephen T. Brown in Miami at 10:00 A.M.

The maximum statutory sentences for each count in the Indictments are: five (5) years in prison and a \$2 million fine for conspiracy to traffic in counterfeit goods; ten (10) years in prison and a \$2 million fine for trafficking in counterfeit goods; and five (5) years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for illegally concealing and selling counterfeit goods.

The Indictments allege that the defendants conspired to traffic in, and did actually traffic in, goods violating trademarks: such goods included electrical cords, batteries, handbags, wallets, suitcases, shoes, hats, sunglasses, watches, key holders, umbrellas, and different items of clothing and accessories bearing the counterfeit trademarks of Underwriters Laboratories, Duracell, Louis Vuitton, Rolex, Prada, Gucci, Coach, Disney, Nike, Major League Baseball, Oakley, and others.

The Indictments also allege that defendants Lizhou Shao, Changbiao Fu, Li Fen Fu, Ji Wu Chen, and Meihua Li, imported counterfeit goods from China to their homes and warehouses. The defendants then sold these counterfeit products directly from these warehouses as well as from booths at the Opa-Locka Flea Market. The management of the Opa-Locka Flea Market has cooperated during this investigation.

On December 13, 2005, ICE agents and officers from the Miami-Dade Police Department, pursuant to arrest and search warrants, arrested the defendants and conducted searches of their homes, warehouses, and flea market booths. The quantity of counterfeit items seized filled several tractor trailers with not only counterfeit clothing and clothing accessories but also untested and hazardous electrical cords and batteries. In addition, illegal toy Glock pistols were seized from defendants Ji Wu Chen and Meihua Li.

United States Attorney Acosta stated, "The sale of counterfeit items deprives trademark owners of their rightful property. What is more, the sale of fake goods exposes unwary consumers to potentially serious physical harm. In this case, for example, during this holiday season when so many persons decorate their homes, innocent consumers purchased potentially substandard, untested and unsafe electrical cords that may give rise to fire hazards."

"ICE is committed to working with its federal, state and local partners to protect the American consumer from inferior and unsafe products, and to ensure that the interests of legitimate trademark holders are addressed," added Jesus Torres, Special Agent-in-Charge of ICE in Miami. "We will continue to pursue these counterfeiters who not only compromise our economy, but more importantly, the safety of our citizens."

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as well as the assistance provided by the Miami-Dade Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jason Emilios Dimitris.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.